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THE THREE WORLD-SEASONS.

The winter season of the world has gone,
Those arctic ages when the frozen brain
Let no gray atom melt and flow to thought;
When every hidden root lay cold and dark,
Unconscious of its life, beneath the snow;
When every seed, with summer instincts, slept
And shuddered in its sleep, and dreamed of leaves;
When every throb of life was sternly checked,
By chill Repression, procuress to Death.

The springtime season of the world is here.
Heroic days of strife and turbulence,
When blows the March wind in rebellious glee.
They who love peace must seek a younger star;
Here all things clash, and break, and change, and grow;
The snowdrifts melt into one common stream,
Until the swift flood hurls the ice ashore.
The glacier slips and floats to warmer seas;
The white grass struggles underneath the stone.

The summer season of the world shall come,
That final age of verdure, bloom and fruit,
Of which the river lisped and robins sang;
When every acorn bursts into the oak
Of its ideal, and clasps the genial soil;
When every seed beneath the kindly sun
Unfolds the fullness of its inner self;
When winter's frost and springtime's broil are past.
And all the purpose of the year made plain.

—Herbert N. Casson, in The Vanguard.

Man's Attitude Toward Prostitutes.

If at this day, when fathers of women spend the best and most impressionable years of their lives in visiting and thinking of prostitutes, the tendency of some women toward prostitution requires explanation. Mr. Brown fails as utterly in his effort to make it as he errs in his statement of facts.

The savage woman, he says, prostituted the natural periodic function in order to escape ill-treatment—pain. To escape pain herself, she sought to give pleasure to her persecutor.

The savage woman, to do this, must have reached a higher moral development than we have attained, for had she cunningly reasoned that by giving pleasure to her tormentor she could escape pain, and acted accordingly, the present order of society would not exist, since her children must have inherited these tendencies, and the moral teachers who have from time to time sought to show the world that to render good for evil is the best policy would be supernumeraries instead of curiosities.

Has the human male a superior moral perception? Surely Mr. Brown's statement is theological! The human male is of a different species from the female; he is not dependent for existence on the same causes; the same effects do not act in like manner on him; he was not born of this "non-moral" woman; she did not rear, care for, nor teach him—hence the influences at work on him were different from those which formed her. At least if we accept Mr. Brown's conclusions, these statements must be correct.

As a matter of fact, the minds of the average man and woman are alike, and the lower in the scale of civilization the more ready are both to use the club and the law to right their marital differences, while the license allowed the male before marriage is both degenerating and debauching. Except for this, their lives are spent in much the same manner; their tastes, when healthy, are alike; so it must be from this slime and debauchery (from which he pretends to want to save woman) that he gained his added social sense. Nor is it settled that there is no instance of prostitution in others than women; some well-informed writers have even said that there were and are male prostitutes; and this being so, the only reason that there are not more must be because there is no demand for them.

Mr. Brown says that woman abandons her young more readily than do the lower animals. I do not know enough about animals in their wild state to say whether this is so or not. Neither, I am sure, does Mr. Brown. But it may be true, since no other male animal has evolved a moral society fitted to make the offspring an instrument of torture to the mother.

I do not know that animals, when left to themselves, will not rear deformed offspring. I know by observation that a cat or a dog will select from the brood the malformed and carry it away and leave it to die, and when all the brood are deformed the mother deserts them entirely, nor ever returns until they are dead. And it seems to me that there is more warrant for the reasoning mother to desert the offspring of deformed social conditions than for the natural mother to desert deformed offspring.

All Mr. Brown's arguments have been used before, and are generally accepted by men who neither can nor desire to defend their double standards. They are not troubled about their non-moral aspect; they accept because they made the rules, and it was only natural with their fine sense of justice they should fix themselves first in the lop-sided game of degradation. It needed the genius of man to call it justice that he should shift the responsibility of his sins onto woman and then punish her for them.

Perhaps she would upset the universe for a mere whim—for anything she desired. But so entirely do the moralists agree on the non-moral quality of the universe that their feelings, as well as mine, may be summed up in this verse from the Rubaiyat of Omar-Khayyam:

"Ah, Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
Remold it nearer to the heart's desire?"

Mr. Brown uses Tess and Trilby as general illustrations. I might just as readily take Sue in "Jude the Obscure," whose sense of justice leads her to inflict on herself the worst fate she could imagine to expiate a wrong she thought herself responsible for. Or Marty South in the story of "The Woodlanders," and use these as typical of the average woman. But, as a matter of fact, none of these represents the average; else they would not have waited for Thomas Hardy and Du Maurier to give them birth. They are all unusual characters placed in unusual circumstances. The average is found in the literature of the average person—the Fireside Companion, Family Story Paper, etc.—and here it is prominent that the man is lacking in moral fiber. He wobbles through the story very much worried about his appearance and stroking his mustache, while two women play at being in love with him. He never knows which one he wants—either will do for him. So now he is the toy of the dark-haired, dark-eyed, wicked beauty, whilst anon the gentle, light-haired, good and characterless beauty plays with him; and as the story-teller must point a moral, the good girl wins him for a husband, and one

life when he retorted, against his persecutors, that the Christian Bible is an obscene book and unfit for general reading on that account; thus admitting that there may be obscenity PER SE, or independent of the mind that perceives it as such.

By this concession old Father Bennett made a practical surrender to his enemies, surrendering to them his best defensive weapon. By this concession he ceased to be a logical Freethinker and became a Christian moralist, on one vastly important point, at least.

And from that time onward the Truth Seeker ceased to be a logical or radical Freethought journal, as I understand the requirements of logical Freethought, and as voiced by the "Nine Demands."

If, therefore, I had really printed and Macdonald had refused to print—as he says he does—what he calls an "unprintable epithet," he would have been quite consistent with Bennett's and with Ingersoll's positions, as I understand them, on the obscenity question.

Does he not also, by this answer, ally himself with the postal censors and the United States prosecuting attorneys when they declare, as they have often done, that the matter they prosecute is "too vile to be spread upon the records of the court?"

* * *

INGERSOLL AGAINST HIMSELF.

If it were true, as stated in the indictment, that I "charge that Colonel Ingersoll did not try to help the Chicago Anarchists"—which statement is absolutely false, the exact opposite being the truth of my attitude in the matter—if it were true that I am an enemy of Ingersoll because at one time he "delivered a sort of panegyric on marriage," which is also false, as I have often explained that I once held similar views—if it were true that my object in writing of Ingersoll has been to injure his reputation as a man and as a Freethinker, I could not wish a better helper in this work of adverse criticism than the life record of Ingersoll himself. The world accepts it as the verdict of the ages that "actions speak louder than words," and that "a man is known by the company he keeps." I do not need to tell my critic that Ingersoll took employment with Mark Hanna in 1896 to help secure the triumph of the party whose slogan was, "There are no trusts, no classes, in this country"; the party of high tariffs, of restricted, gold-standard currency; the party of privilege, the party of inequality, of despotism and slavery. I do not need to remind my readers of what Ingersoll's social and business affiliations were. In the same copy of the Truth Seeker from which I have quoted appears the following paragraph:

> "The Supreme Court of Montana has affirmed the decision of the lower court in the suit of the Robert G. Ingersoll estate against the heirs of A. J. Davis. The fee agreed upon was $100,000, of which $5,000 has been paid. The suit was to recover the balance, which the lower court awarded. We congratulate the family of Colonel Ingersoll upon the result."

For myself, I cannot "congratulate" the family of the beloved and honored Robert G. Ingersoll upon the result of this suit, any more than I could congratulate the lawyer who won the suit for Stephen Dorsey, who was believed to have robbed the people, the working men and women of the United States, to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars, one hundred thousand of which it was reported his defender received as his share of the "boodle."

In saying this, be it always remembered, I do not impugn the MOTIVES of the man Ingersoll. I can easily conceive that a good man might join a band of pirates and accept a part of the booty, with the intention and the hope of thereby breaking up the band and making piracy ever after dishonorable and hateful. I know not what his motives were, but on the surface the FACTS were against him, and, as I said before, no one can make more damaging charges against Ingersoll as a political economist and friend of the workingman than did Ingersoll, by the record he made against himself.

For the man and brother Robert G. Ingersoll—I do not like term "Colonel"; it is too suggestive of wholesale murder and devastation—for the man Ingersoll I have not the slightest feeling of hate or ill-will, knowing full well that we are all the victims of heredity and environment; on the contrary, my gratitude and love for what he did to unshackle the human mind knows no bounds. It is only to counteract the disposition in many quarters to make him the patron saint of the Freethought movement and to crystalize his mistakes, as well as his virtues, into an idol to be worshipped and imitated that I have raised a voice of dissent and warning. M. HARMAN.

NAMES FOR SAMPLES.—Will our readers everywhere kindly remember to send names of their friends who might be interested in Lucifer's work if they could see a sample copy?

Target Practice.

The Michigan Fruit Belt has had far too little rain and sunshine and too much frost and cool weather for the happiness of the fruit grower. Nature and the capitalist system seem to have gone into partnership here.

—

The series of articles by Prof. James Morton on "Free Speech and Free Press," which has been appearing in The Demonstrator at Home, Wash., is perhaps the best that has been written for many moons. Comrade Morton possesses the rare gift of knowing what to say and how to say it.

—

Now that the discussion in Lucifer involving the economic beliefs of Ingersoll has perhaps passed the equatorial line it is only fair to say that as usual Editor Harman has most manfully held his position against the crossfire of the attacking hosts. He comes out of the affray with not so much as a powder-burn, and I believe the discussion has been a most profitable one.

—

While Ingersoll was a giant in defense of free thought on religious lines, he was a pigmy in the realm of economics. Like most lawyers, if he saw the truth he was not brave enough to stand by Emerson's immortal words: "He serves all who dares be true."

—

In speaking of books A. K. Beem, a collegian of Benton Harbor, said to me recently: "'Dawn-Thought,' by J. William Lloyd, is perhaps the best book I ever read. I call it my Bible." I fear that we have not appreciated Comrade Lloyd along with Carpenter as we should have done. "Dawn-Thought" will live.

—

And this reminds me to say that Lucifer—that has struggled so desperately and long to express certain facts in defiance of the powers that be—can boast of as able a corps of writers as can be found on any other American journal, and this is saying a good deal. It is several years in advance of most of the editors who are snapping and snarling at the advocates of freedom and common sense in political and social relations.

—

More and more I am coming to appreciate the splendid service to humanity performed by the late Ida C. Craddock. Her "Right Marital Living" should be issued by the government free, in place of the tons of rubbish that now emanate from the public printing office. I know of no book ever printed by the government that is half as important for the happiness of all as this little brochure. HENRY B. ALLEN.

Benton Harbor, Mich.

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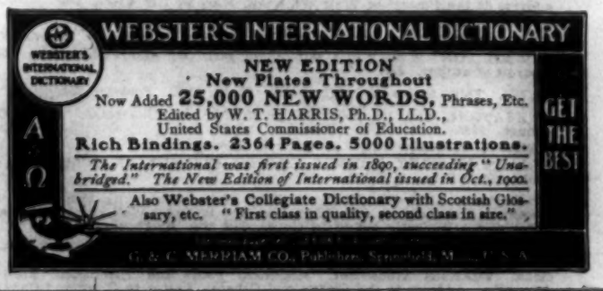
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